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COVER: The Klypak home. See *Architect and Artist's Rural Retreat*, p. 45. Photo: Darrell Noakes



# HOME Front



Photo: Kevin Greggain

In this issue, we focus on architecture. It's our way of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Saskatchewan Association of Architects. Thanks to the tremendous input of our local architects and other experts on Saskatoon's home styles and history, you could become a veritable tour guide of our city's neighbourhoods.

Our team at HOME fervently believe that the more you know about your home, neighbourhood and city, the more you enjoy and appreciate them. Let the Fall issue of HOME be the test. By the time you finish reading, chances are you'll be able to tell the architectural style of your home (see p.10), and be able to point to the ceiling with a knowing eye (p. 18). For the owners of older homes, you'll be spurred into delving into its history, aided by the sources – most of them free or nearly so – that our history writer Jeff O'Brien has provided (p. 16).

Speaking of history, we've identified several of Saskatoon's most prominent homes – built by the barons of the prairie of yesteryear (p. 55). Now when you drive by that certain mansion on Saskatchewan Crescent, you'll know the inside story! (Ever wonder about the magnificent home at the corner of 115th and Central in Sutherland? Wonder no more.)

All this focus on architecture might get you thinking of doing some renovations – or even a complete tear-down. Before you go too far, we've got some money-saving advice: interview a few architects. If you've never thought of "money-saving" and "architect" in the same sentence, read

the article on page 33. You'll also want to follow the free architectural advice we've researched for you on page 24 – the "dos and don'ts" that every neighbour wishes all their other neighbours would read and heed. Also on the subject of renos, see our regular *Homeowners and the Law* feature (p. 9 – but you might need a permit).

What happens when architects follow their own advice? The last of our three-part series on the wonderful new home of the Klypaks speaks volumes about the true value of architecture in enhancing our lives. Read it (p. 45). You will be inspired.

And just when you thought that autumn meant the end of yard planning and yardwork, our gardening expert Denise Balcaen would like a word – actually a few words – with you (p. 66). Especially if you've planted new perennials this past summer, Denise's advice can help ensure that next spring those perennials really are.

Before I go – an invitation. Saskatoon HOME is pleased to be part of the Saskatoon Fall Home Show, October 28-30 at Prairieland Park. We proudly present Andrew Downward, painter extraordinaire and host of HGTV's *Divine Design*. To give you a sample of what you'll learn – or at least a consolation if you can't make the Show – we offer some of Andrew's favourite painting tips on p. 6.

Enjoy!

Yours at HOME,

AMANDA SOULODRE  
PUBLISHER

Got suggestions? Comments? Questions?  
Want to see back issues of HOME? Visit  
[saskatoon-home.ca](http://saskatoon-home.ca).

# HOME

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# Patience and Paint Sense: Decorating Tips from Andrew Downward



Photo courtesy: Andrew Downward

Are you a homeowner with dingy walls? Have you tried to transform your space with a paintbrush, only to end up with more paint on your body than the walls, and a raging headache? Before you throw your paint-spattered hands up in despair, consider some suggestions from an expert.

Andrew Downward from HGTV's *Divine Design* desires to inspire homeowners to embrace their painting potential. His insightful workshop is part of the *Saskatoon Fall Home Show*, October 28-30 at Prairieland Park.

Downward suggests three steps for a successful painting venture. First, prepare the room to ensure no objects stand between you and your creativity by removing furniture and knick-knacks. Create a smooth surface for your inspiration by cleaning and sanding walls, filling holes, caulking around trim and baseboards, and priming with a latex primer.

Second, invest in quality products. Aim to spend about twenty dollars on a paint

roller; before using, wrap your new roller in masking tape and pull it off a few times to remove excess lint. Invest in quality paint as well. The short term financial pain will result in the long term gain of the paint lasting up to a decade rather than requiring refreshing every few years.

Now that your home and your products are prepared, you are ready for the third step of application. Sadly, homeowners often follow colour trends but regret their choice soon after application. Developing a personal 'paint sense' can be overwhelming, but choosing a colour that reflects your personal style is more important than following colour trends. To discover your personal palette, Downward suggests searching your clothes closet for inspiration. Chances are there will be a dominant colour theme in your wardrobe that reflects you, and this will also look great on your wall...unless the majority of your wardrobe is neon remnants from the eighties! Another way to choose colour is to consider

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cherished heirloom pieces you want to showcase. That antique cabinet from your grandmother with shades of purple may provide the colour palette for the rest of the room.

If you have a limited budget or just want a quick room booster, an easy way to uplift your space is painting an accent wall. Choosing an extremely bold colour can sometimes backfire, but Downward shares a foolproof tip: Search out the paint chip containing the colour on your walls and choose the extreme in the same colour for your accent wall. The colour will pop but will not be garish or overwhelming.

In addition to 'paint sense', another key ingredient for beautiful walls is patience. Hurrying through a project can result in messy and potentially costly problems. Be patient with both the process and yourself. Sometimes this may mean

painting in stages so that you can dedicate the necessary time for a successful project.

To highlight your painting prowess and create a space of light and warmth in your home, it is also important to choose the right lighting, furniture and accessories. To find assistance in planning a renovation, discover other home improvement products and ideas, or learn from experts like Downward and HGTV renovation specialist John Sillaots in person, attend the *Saskatoon Fall Home Show*. This is a rare opportunity to get hands-on professional help without the professional price tag attached! Homeowners will discover the latest in interior design, décor and home improvement ideas from 150 trend-setting exhibitors. 

RACHEL CLARE

To learn more about the tradeshow or Andrew Downward visit [www.showswork.com](http://www.showswork.com) or [www.andrewdownward.com](http://www.andrewdownward.com).

## Saskatoon Fall Home Show

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# Homeowners and the Law

Bill and Susan are about to completely renovate their kitchen. Susan's father, quite a "do-it-yourselfer", is going to do the work. According to him, they will not require a permit. "You're not building a new kitchen that wasn't there before," he says. "You're just replacing your old one." Is he right?

Bob Baran, head of the Building Standards Branch the City of Saskatoon says "it depends." According to Baran, "If this project involves repairs or replacement of existing kitchen finishes then Susan's dad is right." This would include things like replacing windows and doors of the same size or updating plumbing fixtures if the work does

not involve constructing, altering or repairing the plumbing system.

However, if walls are coming down and new construction or major modifications are being done to the existing kitchen, a building permit will be required and you would contact SaskPower for any information or questions about the electrical requirements.

Baran says, "Tearing down walls may affect the structure, vapour barrier or even some basic safety requirements for the house." He suggests the best approach is to have Susan's father draw out a simple but clear plan showing the existing elements that may be modified and a plan of the

finished kitchen layout, and then bring it in to Building Standards to see if a building permit is necessary and/or what information is required.

In the end, Baran says building permits are a homeowner's best defence in protecting their investment or potential investment in a home, so it's best for Bill, Susan and her dad to check before they get started. Otherwise, they might have difficulties. For example, realtors may advise buyers to ask for proof of permits from the seller (known as Property Information Disclosures) that can be difficult to obtain after the fact, when studding, electrical and insulation have been covered by a finished wall. (H)

TOM KENNEDY

Visit the City of Saskatoon website – [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca) – for information on building permit applications. If a personal visit to their office is not possible, email the information to [building.standards@saskatoon.ca](mailto:building.standards@saskatoon.ca) or call 975-3236. Be sure to provide a name, accurate contact information and a description of the project. Building Standards will do what they can to determine the necessary steps to take if a building permit is required. Typically, they can get back to you within 24 hours.

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# THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF SASKATOON'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

Jordan Jackson | Photography: Darrell Noakes







*You may not know the architectural style of your home, and searching the Internet for a match can be a tedious process. Consider instead the idea that all house styles fit into one of five categories: classical, colonial, Victorian, modern, and post-war (WWII). Each category contains styles that share similar influences, and are very different compared to styles from other categories. Thinking of styles in this way makes it easier to narrow down the possible architectural influences behind your own home.*

## **Classical**

Classical styles draw inspiration from the architecture of Ancient Greece. Houses of this nature will feel grand and stable through their two most common elements: the columns and the pediment.

The columns are tall and cylindrical, and were historically constructed from either a solid block of stone, or multiple stacked segments. Though modern columns can still be made of stone, it is more likely that they will be facsimiles made of steel or aluminium.

The pediment is the triangular section located above the columns, and may form part of the roof of the house. If large enough, the recessed triangular area, known as the tympanum, will feature decorative work.

The two most common classical styles for homes are Neoclassical and Greek Revival. Both styles in their pure forms are symmetrical with a centred front entrance. The porch of a Neoclassical house will be at the house's full height and feature classically large columns, whereas the porch and columns on a Greek Revival house will be focused on the main entrance.

## **Colonial**

Colonial styles follow the architecture of houses of the colonial period of the United States. The original colonial style houses were built between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries by colonists from Europe. Most of the colonial styles are thus named after the various nationalities, such as French, Spanish, Dutch, and German. Such houses were built for their utility, but their construction also reflected the character of their namesake nationality.

Colonial houses are generally symmetrical. Paired chimneys are common, as are paired windows on either side of the front door. Houses with a second floor will often have more paired windows directly above those on the first floor.

In Saskatoon, the most easily identifiable and common are Dutch and Georgian Colonial houses. Dutch Colonial houses are distinguished by their steeply curving roof, known as a gambrel. In some house designs, this may go so far as to curve right into the structure of the house itself. Georgian Colonial houses, named after British monarchs George I, II, III, and IV, are usually rectangular, utilize a roof with low overhang, and feature a decorative moulding over the front door known as a cornice. 





Classical

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## Victorian

Victorian styles emerged during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) and took advantage of the boom in mass-production through industrialization that made building materials more affordable. As such, Victorian homes feature detailed decoration on design elements large and small.

Victorian styles favour wood, stone and stucco. They are usually, though not always, asymmetrical and will feature a cross-gabbling roof design that is usually steeply pitched. The intricate details combined with the natural construction materials give Victorian style homes an air of rustic sophistication.

A common Victorian style in Saskatoon is the Tudor. Tudor houses can be spotted by

their decorative half-timbering, where the space between the exposed wood frame is filled in with plaster, brick, clay or stone. You may also notice tall, but narrow windows that have many panes. Less common, though still archetypical, are large, tall chimneys and an overhanging second floor.

Also, keep out on the lookout for Queen Anne houses. The most prominent feature of such houses is a square or rounded turret. More elaborate designs will also have an expansive porch on the first story and textured shingles on the exterior walls to keep them from looking smooth.

## Modern

Modern styles began to emerge in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Roman Bergerman of Bergerman Architecture



explains best the rationale behind modern architectural styles. "Modernism was to get rid of all decorations," he says, as compared with Victorian styles, "where there was so much decoration on houses, such as on gables and shutters; if there was a panel somewhere it would be decorated. Modernism was a response against that."

If there is a single distinguishing feature of modern styles, it is the clean, straight lines that give shape to the building.

Consider the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright, which Bergerman describes as "connected to the horizontal, connected to the landscape." The clean, straight horizontal lines combined with a low-pitched roof and



Colonial

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Victorian

widely overhanging eaves help Prairie style houses make that connection to the landscape.

The Arts & Crafts style offers a different way to depart from Victorian style ideals. Instead of elaborate, mass-produced decoration, Arts & Crafts houses have a hand-made look to them. Stone and wood are thus popular building materials, and simple square columns supporting the porch give the house a homey feel.

### Post-War

There are two groups of post-war styles. The first are simple but efficient designs, such as the bungalow and the ranch, both of which were favoured for veterans from World War II.

A bungalow is a one or one and a half storey house with a simple floor plan that can be adapted to other styles, such as Arts & Crafts or Tudor. A ranch is typically a single storey house with a low-pitched roof and either a rectangular or L-shaped layout, but a common variant in Saskatoon is the raised ranch, where the main floor is raised to turn the house into a bi-level. Both designs are simple, but quite practical.

The second group of post-war styles are quite conscious towards building costs and energy efficiency. The vast majority of such houses, built in new subdivisions, are of the neo-eclectic and California Styles.

A neo-eclectic combines the features of multiple architectural styles. For example, an architect may



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Modern

try to mix the gambrel roof of a Dutch Colonial with the columns and pediment of a classical style. As for the California Style, Bergerman describes it as generally a larger house, made of stucco, with a big roofline and with a garage out front.

## Exploring Styles

Don't be surprised if identifying house styles doesn't come naturally. This may be because you have encountered a style that wasn't listed above. However, the features of almost any style will still fit one of the above five categories, so you should still be able to identify roughly your house type. Furthermore, there has been a significant blending of styles in Saskatoon for several decades beyond the mixing expressed in the neo-eclectic style.

Therefore, though your home may not be an archetypal example of a certain style, it may still hold true to the principles of architectural design. Bergerman mentions that the architect Vitruvius of Ancient Rome had

three principles - firmness, commodity and delight - and that today's architects still adhere to these principles.

For houses, Bergerman says, "Firmness means it's well-built. Commodity means that it's useful, practical, and works for you. And delight: it's beautiful to look at."

If you would like to further explore what brings delight to you, there are several great places in Saskatoon for those who want to see the city's architectural creativity. Bergerman recommends exploring the old downtown areas for Victorian style houses and the University area for a good selection of unique designs. Try also 11<sup>th</sup> St. and 10<sup>th</sup> St. off Clarence Avenue for houses of the Arts & Crafts style, as well as the odd Dutch Colonial. There's a good selection of older houses of many styles, as well as stylistically matching in-fill by local builders. Lastly, visit Montgomery Place to see the old "wartime" houses, as well as Saskatchewan Crescents East and West for some very creative interpretations of styles across all categories. **H**

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# Researching Your House



*Photo B 3418 courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library*

Unless we live in a brand new house, most of us can't help but wonder about what it was like before we moved in. How old is it? What did it look like? Who built it? Who lived here? Often our interest is pure curiosity and sometimes

it's more practical, like what renovations have occurred. Quite frequently, people are seeking an explanation for otherwise unexplainable phenomena that appear to be happening in the house. Whether you're worried about the wiring, plagued

with the paranormal, or just want to know more about the people who lived there before you, there are resources to help you find out.

For building plans and permits, start at Building Standards in City Hall. For a fee, they can provide

you with house plans, building permits (which will incidentally tell you when and by whom the house was built) and detailed building abstracts. Unfortunately, Building Standards has very little information about houses built before the





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time around 1950. For the early years, there are permit registers which give very basic information about alterations to a property, such as to indicate that a house or a garage was built in a certain year, and its value. In this case, to get information you must be either the property owner or have written authorization.

For older houses, try the City Archives. Unfortunately, nearly all the pre-1950 house plans were disposed of in the mid-1990s. Only a random scattering remain, with nothing to suggest why they were kept while others were discarded. One suspects that they were simply overlooked. One exception to this are the wartime house plans. Distinctive one and two-storey houses built across Canada by the federal Wartime Housing Corporation in the 1940s to help address the post-war housing crisis. These wartime houses are instantly recognizable. The City Archives has copies of all the floor plans that were available, and it becomes simply a matter of going through them until you find the one that resembles the house you live in. This is also true of catalogue houses, about which there are books at the library.

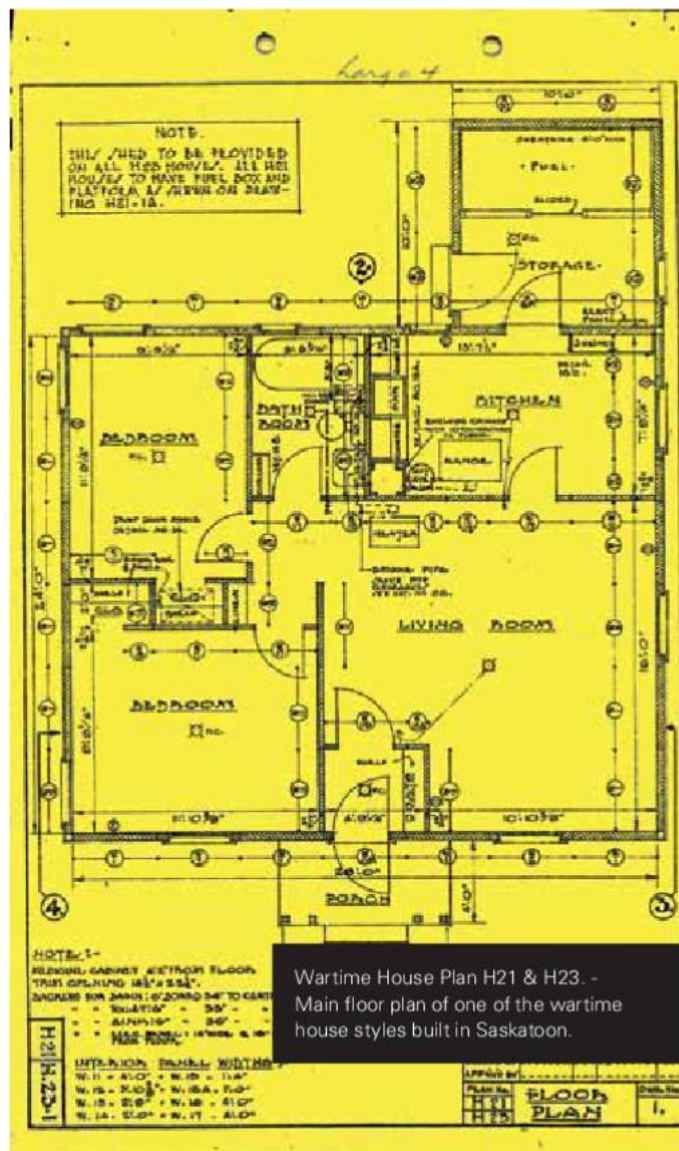
Henderson Directories (1908-2000) can tell you who used to live in your house. Like a telephone book, they list people by addresses. Unlike a telephone book, they also say what the person's occupation or employer was, and usually include other adult members of the household. Most importantly, they have a reverse look-up section,

with names indexed by address. A word of caution: they are not completely accurate or always inclusive. But they are an excellent first step and can be used in conjunction with other publicly available sources like Voters Lists (available at the City Archives) and obituaries. You can find directories at City Archives and at the Local History Room in the Saskatoon Public Library downtown.

Researchers often want old photographs of their house. This can be tricky. The Local History Room's extensive photograph collection may include a shot of your house or street. City Archives has photographs taken more recently as part of streetscape documentation projects beginning in about the 1970s, but the coverage is very selective. Aerial photographs will tell you quite a bit about a neighbourhood (City Archives for these). Even better are the Fire Insurance maps: block by block, large scale plans of the city done between 1907-1958. Again, the City Archives is the place for these.

There are other, more specific resources available through the library and the City of Saskatoon, including advice about how to research your house. One resource that researchers often overlook are their own neighbours, as well as the people who once lived in the home (or their families) who may have old stories and photographs, and who might even be able to provide an explanation for those eerie sounds you keep hearing from the basement late at night. 

JEFF O'BRIEN



Wartime House Plan H21 & H23. - Main floor plan of one of the wartime house styles built in Saskatoon.

Photo courtesy: COS Archives 1069-579



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# ADORNING THE FIFTH WALL

Patricia Dawn Robertson | Photography courtesy of Fresco Interiors



Coffered Ceiling

The low-key ceiling is enjoying a bit of a Renaissance. Everyone can point to the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City as a remarkable feat of architecture and painting. But what about your own living room ceiling?

The fifth wall, as designers like to call it, has been overlooked, but the current appetite for open, dramatic spaces means that ceilings are becoming a site of decoration – and they are getting higher.

Architectural designer Crystal Bueckert says the homes she works on now have higher ceilings. “Most of what we talk about with clients ends up being about ceiling height. And that changed a bit over the years. The nine-foot ceiling is the complete norm now. Many clients are going to a ten-foot ceiling on their main floor.”

Bueckert has a BFA in painting in addition to her background in home design, but she doesn’t do any interior design. “I design just the space, not the materials. I focus on the structural aspects of the room layout. Ceiling height and ceiling variation, etc. In my mind, I leave the walls as a big white space.”

Bueckert Home and Cottage Design, where Bueckert works alongside her brother Dustin, designs mostly modern houses. For many new homes, the living area is located in the back and that’s where the vault and atrium spaces are found.

Many homeowners like to have a wall of two-storey glass to overlook the backyard. To balance out all of these grand spaces, Bueckert does a few tray ceilings for her clients’ master bedrooms. “The tray ceiling is a great way to bring the ceiling down. It creates intimacy,” she says.





Barrel Ceiling

Bueckert encourages homeowners to look at the fifth wall as a potential space for creativity. "There's nothing worse than looking at a blank ceiling. It's like living in an office space."

True to her word, Bueckert's own home office space resembles a tree-house as it's

located on the third floor of her modern in-fill overlooking the treed backyard and features a homey tongue-and-groove wood ceiling.

Charlene Schumacher, principal designer and proprietor of Fresco Interiors, agrees that the ceiling is an overlooked area of the house.

"In Canada, we don't look at the ceiling as our fifth wall. We just kind of ignore it," she says. This is often because when someone is building or renovating a home they have a tight budget. "You are trying to squeeze it to work with your cabinetry and your backsplash. The last thing

you are thinking about is your ceiling and yet it can have the biggest impact."

Fresco Interiors currently has a major project where the ceiling is playing a starring role. The twelve-year-old home has been gutted right down to the studs, and it's still a work in progress. "The 



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## LOOK UP, WAY UP: A GLOSSARY OF COMMON CEILING TERMS

### BEAM CEILING

An architectural feature where the beams are exposed to view. The millwork adds character to a ceiling and is seen most often in traditionally styled homes.

### TRAY CEILING

A rectangular architectural feature that is either inverted or recessed. Tray ceilings can be plain, ornate, subtle or dramatic. Lighting is commonly featured in a tray ceiling. The purpose of a tray ceiling is to break up an ordinary flat ceiling surface and add variation in height to create architectural interest.

### DROP CEILING

A secondary ceiling hung below the main structural ceiling. The suspended ceiling was originally developed to conceal the underside of the floor above and to offer acoustic balance and control in a room.

### COFFER

A sunken panel in the shape of a square, rectangle or octagon housed in a ceiling, soffit or vault. The stone coffers of the ancient Greeks and Romans are the earliest surviving examples of coffering. A prominent example of coffering is the Pantheon in Rome; it employed coffers to lighten the weight of the domed ceiling.

### BARREL VAULT

A series of arches placed side by side where the curves are semi-cylindrical in shape. The barrel vault is the simplest form of vault. In Medieval Europe, it was used as an important element in stone construction in monasteries, castles and tower houses.

### VAULT

A vaulted ceiling is an architectural term for an arched form used to provide a space with a ceiling or roof. A ceiling that angles upward on one or both sides to create volume in the room, it's formed from a continuous arch, found in Roman, Classical and Gothic architecture and revival styles. It was a common technique employed in the 19th and 20th century for the construction of crypts and vaults in cemeteries.

### ATRIUM

An atrium is a large open space. It's often several storeys high and has a glazed roof and/or large windows. An atrium is often found within a larger multi-storey building and it's usually located immediately beyond the main entrance doors. Atria are a popular design feature because they give their buildings a feeling of space and light.

22-foot high entry into the living room has been the focus. We've created this coffered ceiling that's about 12 inches deep. The coffered ceiling has a grid system with boxes that are evenly placed. Pot lights shoot from the centers of them so it really brings your eye to the ceiling now. It's not as though it's just a forgotten space that's up there."

The coffered ceiling plays a pivotal role in her design plan, and the rest of the room

is designed to complement it. "What also draws your eye is that we did a black alligator leather wall covering that is from the floor to the ceiling on the one side," says Schumacher. "And right beside it is an ivory luminor porcelain tile that creates a fireplace from floor to ceiling. It's very dramatic."

A recent project the designer executed for TK Homes placed a big emphasis on the ceiling. "We put in a barrel ceiling in that home.

And that was really quite interesting, too, because it's illuminated with lighting on all four sides. So what you see is just this illumination of this circular arched ceiling," says Schumacher.

If homeowners have a flair for the dramatic, you can't beat a barrel ceiling for a high impact effect. "When you walk in this home, it shoots you from the entry right across the great room and then across to the view. The house has great expansive

windows." And it doesn't cost nearly as much as a medieval cathedral. Schumacher says that the cost of a residential barrel ceiling ranges from \$1,500-\$3,000.

Schumacher assures Saskatoon HOME that a renovation that includes your ceiling also increases the value of your home. "It might look like the neighbour's house from the outside but when you walk in it creates a real wow factor," she says. "When you enter



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It's important to look at lighting effects.

a home, you have to feel welcome. It has to feel very large and airy. There has to be something that grabs you that doesn't look like the average home."

When creating a ceiling, it's also really important to look at lighting effects. It's a big focus in Schumacher's design practice. For one private client, they built an ensuite featuring a recessed tray ceiling with polished marble tile. The chandelier bounced the light off the ceiling and into the room. "It was incredible," says Schumacher.

Schumacher cautions people about the colours and layers of texture on tray ceilings. "It doesn't work if it's too colourful or has too many textures," she says.

The ceiling colours you choose have to be soothing and not too busy. Remember that lighting and ceilings work in tandem. "It's so nice when it's illuminated and you can't see where the light is coming from. You just see light and it makes you feel so at ease," she says.

The options and variations on ceilings are unlimited: the airiness of a vaulted ceiling can provide expansive drama; the structure of a coffer offers texture and detail, and the intimacy of a tray ceiling is perfect for that cozy master bedroom. Whatever ceiling style they choose, homeowners can rest assured that efforts expended adorning the fifth wall will be rewarded. **H**



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# ARCHITECTURE RULES!

Two Saskatoon architects offer advice on renos and new builds in older neighbourhoods

Karin Melberg Schwier



"Hell hath no fury like  
neighbours offended  
by a ghastly renovation  
or stick-out-like-a-sore-  
thumb new house."

*(Apologies to William Congreve, The Mourning Bride, 1697)*

Like the people in them, a vibrant neighbourhood is dynamic, full of character and community spirit and, as the sum of its parts, happy to get along. A harmonious existence is not so much luck, but rather grand design. Two Saskatoon architects agree that there are things homeowners can think about when embarking on a

renovation or a new build – advice that will go a long way toward keeping the peace.

Even well-established neighbourhoods change. When there's a tear-down or when scaffolding appears, neighbours hold their collective breath about what's to come. Architects are trained to be careful 



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Rooflines are an important consideration.



Homes can be unique but still fit into the neighbourhood.



about context. There are municipal acts that respect heritage properties, for example. In most places, though, individuality reigns. Not every home has to look the same. In fact, most architects are supportive of a variety of expressions. But the key is good design.

"A well carried out design is attractive and enhances the streetscape," says Grant McKercher, past-president of the Saskatchewan Architects Association. "You can have a more modern design next to an older one, and if it's designed well, people will accept that and find it attractive." A simple fact of city life is that zoning bylaws, not only in Saskatoon but elsewhere on the prairies, are relatively open. But communities are more willing to consult architects and designers about development – and homeowners are realizing how accessible an architect can be.

"Architects care very much about how neighbourhoods work, not just from a building's point of view," McKercher explains. "We care how people get into their driveways, how they interact with their neighbours, the mix of commercial and retail that helps people stay in the neighbourhood. It's not only about the aesthetics of a building."

Everyone is anxious to get going on a reno or new build, especially when contractors are hard to come by in a short construction season. Even so, architects will counsel homeowners to spend energy in the formative stages, thinking about not just the 'what' of the physical structure, but just as importantly the 'why' and 'how' of what will go on inside it.

Heney Klypak, a Saskatoon-based architect, echoes that spirit. "Good design happens for a reason and that means understanding the homeowner's needs."

Klypak says a good architect will design to a person's needs, not try to fit needs into a preconceived shape. A well-designed project will serve the homeowner well, but will also enhance the neighbourhood, not stick out in it.

"There's a perception that architects only do high rises, art galleries, or hospitals," he says. "But you can hire an architect to do full services, from start to finish, or hourly consultation on 

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Sensitivity to the general feel of the neighbourhood is essential.

Photo: Karen Melberg Schwier

a residential project. I've had people who want to do small renovations who say they just need some ideas on how to improve the front of the house. It's well worth the investment to get some good design ideas in the beginning so you end up with something that looks good and works well in its surroundings. It's a lot easier to make design changes on paper than during the construction process."

Research and courtesies in the initial stages can make all the difference in the success of any renovation or new build.

### Zoning & property parameters

A legal survey will give exact details as to where the house sits in relation to the property line. Nothing will get a reno or build off to a rockier start than a property line dispute. "Go to a surveyor. Talk to the people at Zoning down at city hall," advises Klypak. "I've met some homeowners who request constructing a covered walkway that connects a stand-alone garage to a home.

The city zoning bylaws have different side-yard setbacks for stand-alone garages versus attached garages. If you have a unique idea, pay a visit to the Building Standards Branch with your preliminary idea," he suggests. "The zoning personnel are very helpful in identifying any issues that may affect your proposal."

### Be nice

While a homeowner doesn't need approval from the neighbours (as long as those property lines and zoning details are checked out), it's still neighbourly to let them know about a reno or new build. People are curious. Immediate neighbors deserve to know tradespeople will be on site and when to expect some noise. If garbage blows into their yard, make sure it gets cleaned up.

### Site services

Where do services like natural gas come into the property? Find out where services are; it's not always a big deal to move some services such as electrical. If a design is well thought out and proper drawings are 

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produced, the contractor has a much clearer idea of what to do, and won't guess.

## Scale

Not every home has to look like its neighbour, but sensitivity to the general feel of the neighbourhood is important. "When we're working on a design, we generally will take photos of the neighbourhood so that we can demonstrate the scale and how the home or reno will fit," says Klypak.

## Rooflines

Design geometries go together very easily in an architect's mind, helping to ensure that your renovation doesn't look like an afterthought or cause problems like ice dams. Marrying a new roofline to the original can be tricky to ensure a blended interface. "Some of the most beautiful old houses we have in Saskatoon are actually a series of additions, but you don't get the sense that anything's been tacked on," says

Grant McKercher. "That's a great accomplishment. The vocabulary of their design, all the trimmings, and the architectural decoration lend themselves to flexibility. You can change without disturbing the original design, and maybe even enhance it."

## Physics

Some standard construction techniques in a new build just don't work well in a reno or addition. For relatively little additional cost, potential problems like water infiltration

can be mitigated. The increased load of an addition can be problematic if the original roof wasn't designed to carry it. Snow build-up can be an issue; if the original roof is pre-1960, there were no engineered trusses so reinforcement is likely necessary. Various design options can minimize load-bearing connections. Also, features like bay windows, crawl spaces and bump-outs where air is trapped in cold places need to be treated properly.





Think of how to use natural light.

## Window placement

The size, shape and alignment of the windows should be integrated with other features of the home – and with neighbours in mind. “You can really spot a non-designed renovation or addition because the builder has simply gone with standard methodologies,” says McKercher. “Decisions are sometimes based on cost alone rather than on view or how natural light will be used.” Unless there’s some thought given to more than just the physical installation, sight lines directly into a neighbour’s home can cause tension. 

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## Lighting

People tend to think of lighting as furniture. "In fact, lighting is more closely related to the architecture," says McKercher. "You can get some very nice fixtures, but how do you place them? It makes sense to integrate lighting with the plan instead of adding it in later as an afterthought." Lighting can enhance or create indoor and outdoor mood and character.

## It's not you; it's me

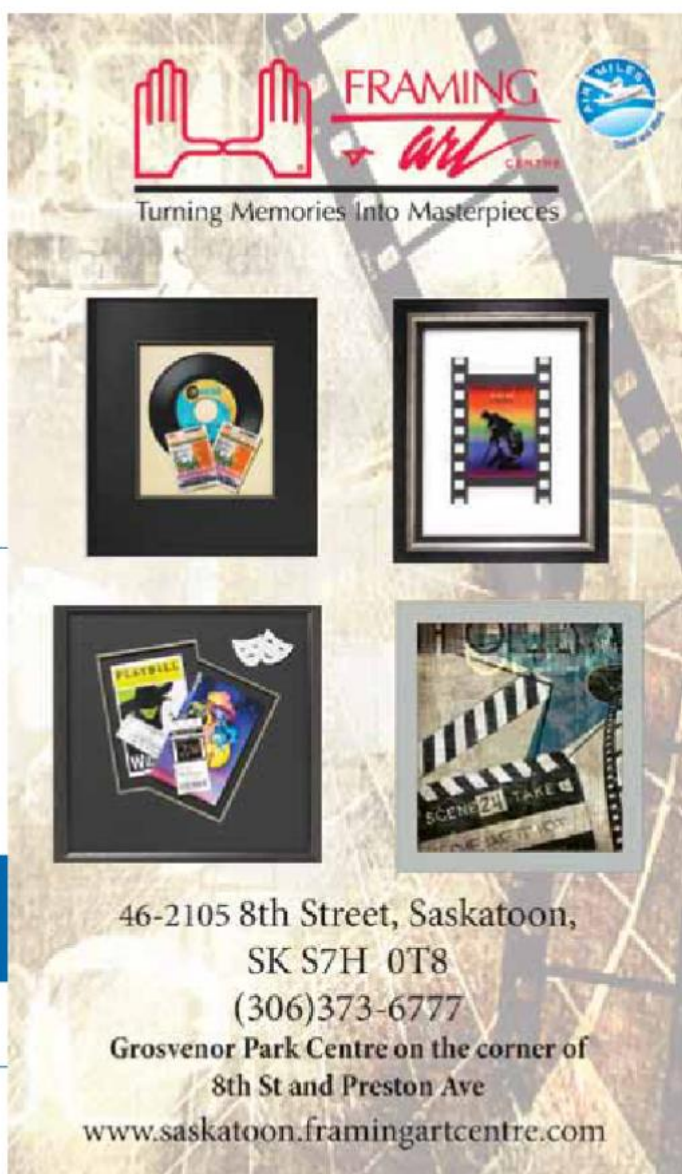
Just because the current real estate market says three bedrooms improve resale value, it doesn't mean that's what's right for you. Design for individual needs rather than for some future unknown buyer. If the idea of three bedrooms makes sense, Klypak says, do it. If two bedrooms and a den suit your lifestyle best, then the decision is made."

Time spent in contemplation with an architect or designer is an investment not just in one house, but also in the neighbourhood. There can be diversity, but the unifying elements create a sense of belonging and cohesiveness. That's an architect's ultimate achievement.

"We love doing this," says McKercher. "There's an enthusiasm for design you'll get from an architect and

they'll bring forward ideas you've just never thought of before. Houses tell a story. It goes back to the amount of thought that goes into the initial design. If you want to put more care into it, if you want to be more engaged with your community, then you want to put that extra thought into what you're doing."

We *can* all just get along. One house, one reno, one design at a time. **H**



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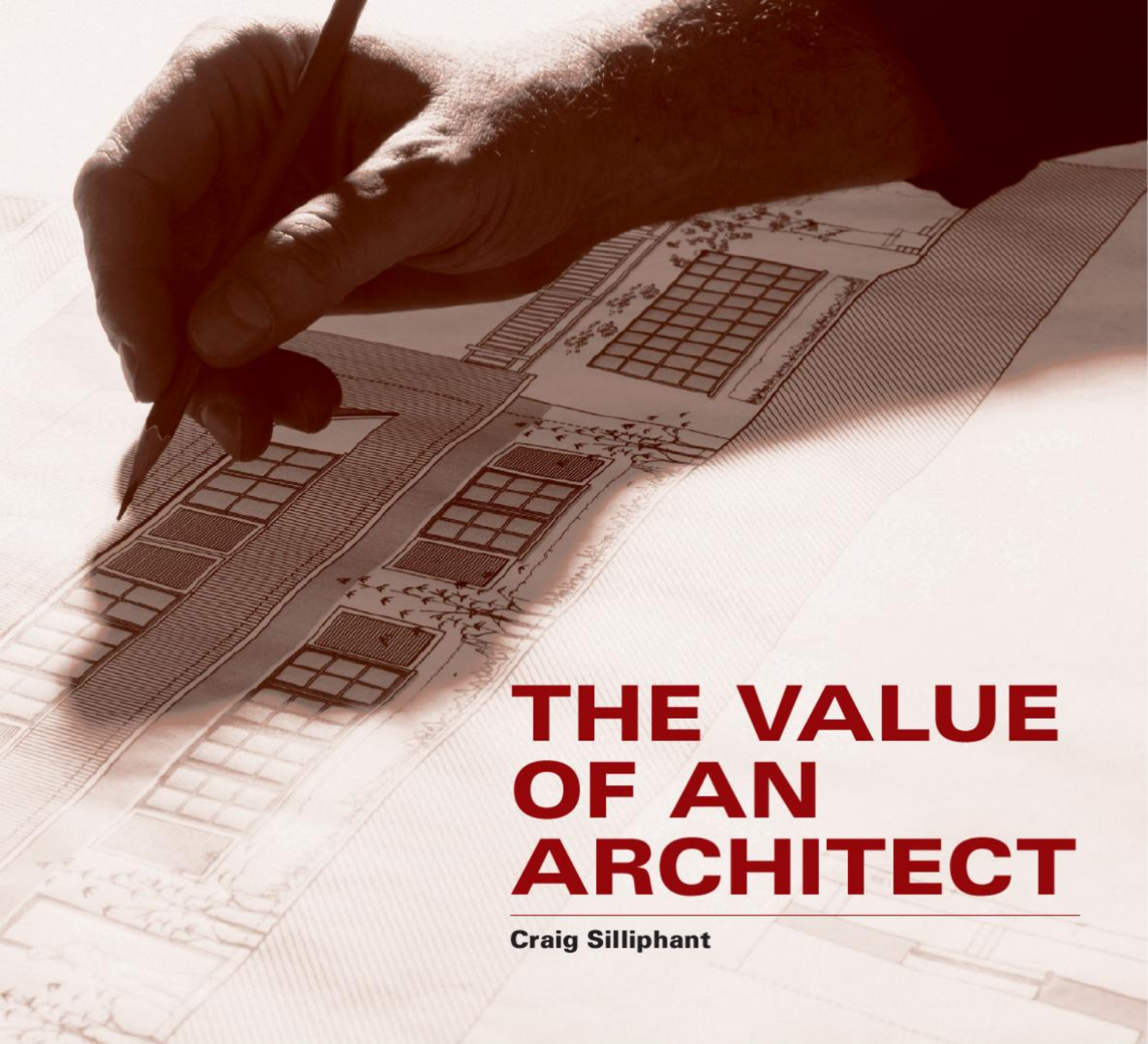
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# THE VALUE OF AN ARCHITECT

**Craig Silliphant**

Showcasing deep rivers of respect for both aesthetics and spatial design efficiency, architecture can be thought of as the place where art meets practicality. Hundreds of years ago, architects were master builders who designed public buildings and monuments to important mucky-mucks and rulers of kingdoms. Though we have less use for such applications

now, the role of the architect is no less important: It has evolved as a conduit for us to talk to our spaces.

"Architecture is an art form," says Justin Wotherspoon, architect from SEPW Architecture, "but it's a funny art form, in that it's not just the heart and soul that goes into the work – it's an interpretation of a client's needs."

You may think that you don't need to (or couldn't afford to) hire an architect, but a closer look at what they do and how they do it seriously challenges those notions. Architects are interpreters, trained to be experts on product, material, light, form, and aesthetics – but most importantly, they have a special skill with people.

"Architects are good at listening and filtering the

specifics that get to the heart of an idea," says Daniel Reeves, architect at AODBT Architecture and Interior Design. "Architects can make suggestions in optimizing or consolidating ideas to simplify things."

"One of the benefits of using an architect," adds Wotherspoon, "is that there is no preconceived notion when you're sitting across the 





Architects have been used for centuries.



table from them. A developer can give you choices, show you plan a, b, and c, but you're not going to get the start-from-scratch mentality of an architect. The first step in our process is to listen. We don't have a stock set of plans that we use, and pull from this one and pull from that one."

All that being said, if using an architect were akin to using a tailor instead of buying off

make the most sense for the homeowner, whose lifestyle will be simplified by their new living quarters.

"You get to sit across from a client and really understand them," says Wotherspoon, "and know that they're actually going to utilize and live in the house. It's so rewarding to watch them see their ideas come to life. It's incredibly rewarding

## The truth is, hiring an architect can save you a bundle.

the rack, most would assume that the only people who need to hire these experts are the William Randolph Hursts and Kubla Khans of the world, building their San Simeon mansions and their stately pleasure domes of Xanadu. However, the single family home is not only one of the most rewarding projects for an architect, but can also

for everyone. In a lot of the commercial projects that we all work on, you're designing an environment for an owner, but you're not necessarily designing that environment for the user. In a hospital, for instance, you don't get to speak all the time to the patient. You're dealing with an intermediary. But with a residential project, you're 





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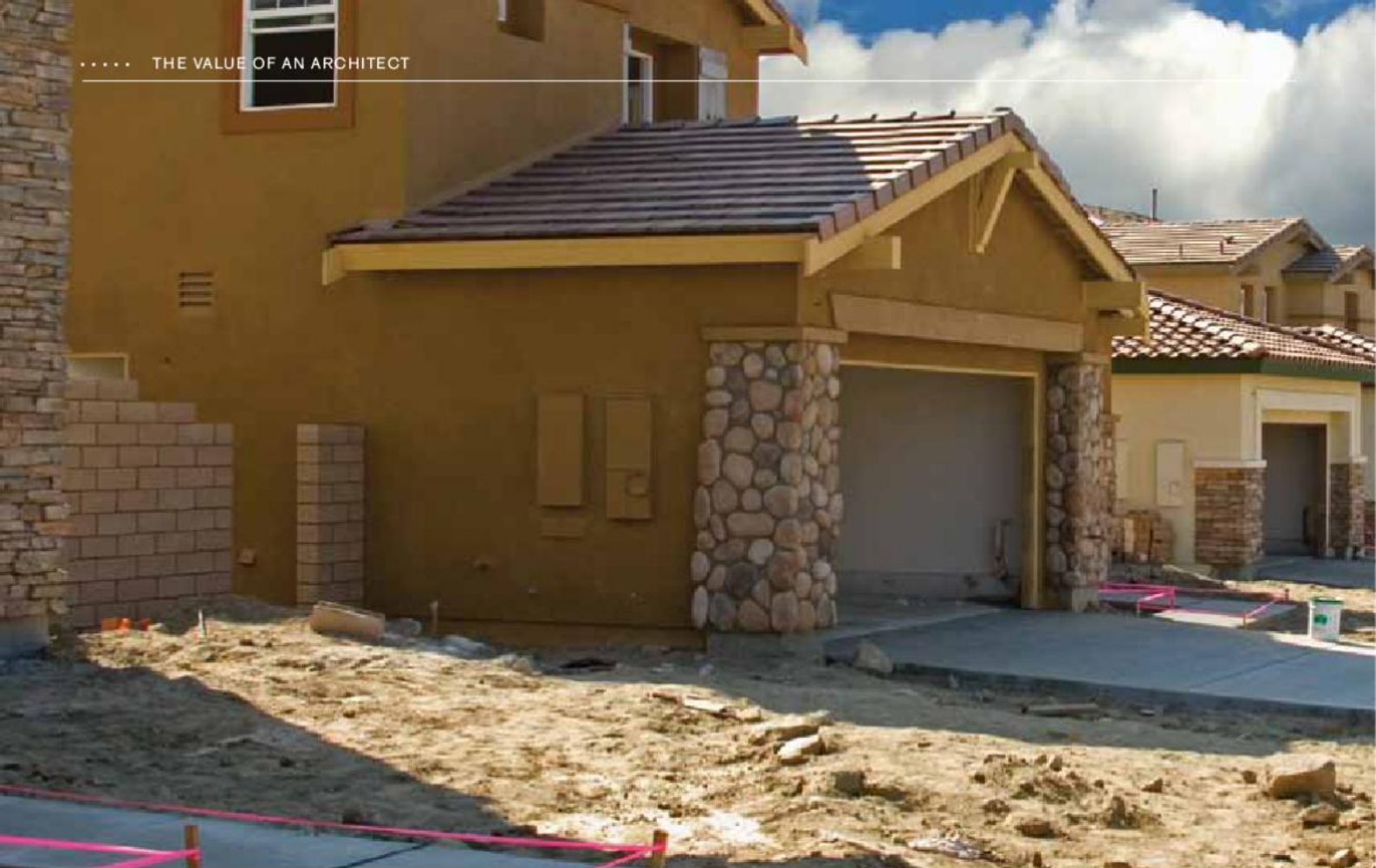
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Architects can help you make the most of your space.

dealing with the person that's going to live in that space."

That all sounds great, but hiring a "fancy expert" to design your space also sounds like you would need Hearst's fat wallet to be able afford an architect. The truth is, it can actually save a family a bundle. Sure, you have to pay architects for their services, but because what they do is so locked into efficiency, an architect can usually create a space that costs much less to operate, heat, and maintain.

"Working with an architect will provide you with a space that is much more customized to your needs," explains Wotherspoon, "and it will not be any more expensive; it will perhaps enjoy greater longevity, perhaps be a bit more timeless, and be more efficient. In fact, a 1200 square foot house may do

you just fine, rather than a 3200 square foot house, if it's designed appropriately. It can save you a lot of money."

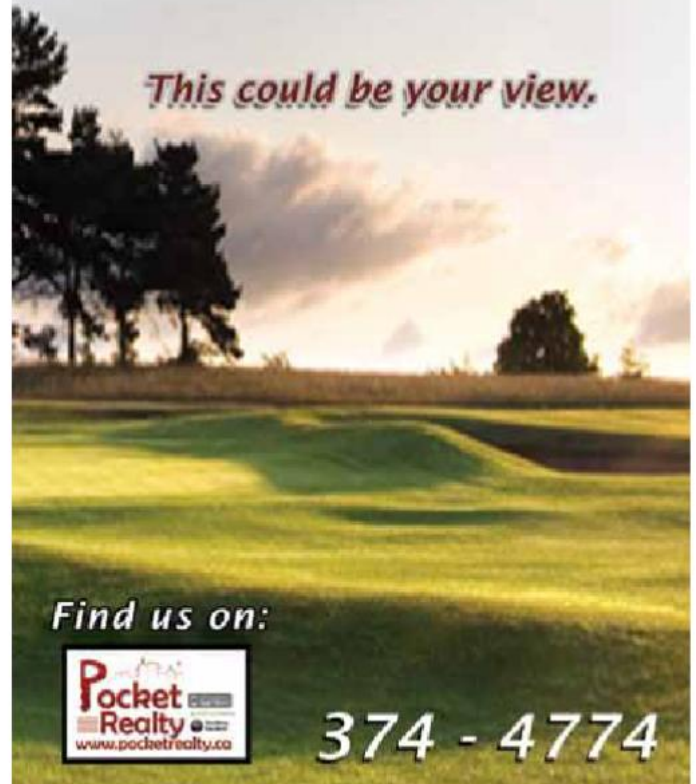
As an example of this thinking, Reeves cites the fact that we do not have washers and dryers in our kitchens, built into the cabinets or under islands, which would be an incredibly efficient use of space and would, in most cases, make a homemaker's life easier. But in this age of mass consumption, our brains have become wired to think we need things we don't. Some of these things make our lives harder instead of easier, like tucking a laundry room deep in the bowels of the basement somewhere, simply because it has become traditional to do so. An architect can look at your life and your preferences and plan accordingly. 



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"These concepts become the fulcrum for removing unnecessary inefficient spaces that occur in plans not by necessity, but tradition," says Reeves. "Architects are able to help see solutions for planning problems that are unique and specific to a particular scheme or plan. These may be quite important to the overall flow of the spaces in the completed home, or it could be as simple as not having a congestion point around the front hall closet."

The savings and resourcefulness don't have to end at the planning stage. If you wish, an architect can see the project from the drawings through to the end of construction. They are useful as an intermediary between the homeowner and the builder. They can be a voice of reason in moments of frustration on both sides and they can work with both to address any hiccups that

occur during the building process. They can also help an owner understand delays or cost overruns, making beneficial changes on the fly if needed.

"Architects can also generate an estimate of construction costs," notes Reeves, "and will work with clients to develop solutions to meet budgetary or schedule constraints."

The architect will ensure that the builders are complying with the plans, which includes using the specified materials and everything else that contributes to the overall design. They have their eye on the bottom line at all times. They can design a space that is so custom fitted to you that you don't have any unnecessary parts to it that cost more to build or operate.

There is one caveat to the hiring of an architect: because building a home is one of the biggest endeavors you'll attack in your life, it's not as simple as



calling the first drafts person you find in the phonebook. If this person is going to peel back the layers of your life and be a 'space whisperer', so to speak, you need to make sure you've hired the right person. Wotherspoon is quick to cite the importance of doing your due diligence.

"I recommend that clients interview and find someone they are compatible with," he explains. "Someone that has a breadth of experience you're comfortable with. Ask to see past projects, ask to see references."

The people who utilize the services of an architect are those who understand that their needs are quite specific. They want a space custom suited to them, which can include everything from being able to streamline their daily activities to being green or

just saving the most money possible on utilities.

"[For our clients], the normal tract house, no matter how it's modified, won't suffice," says Wotherspoon. "There's nothing wrong with what the developers put out there, because most people would be satisfied with that product. But our clients are really quite interested in sitting across the table from someone and having that architect get into their head to analyze their lifestyle to customize their living environment for the way they live." 



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# **HOME Stories:** **WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS**

**THE COMMUNAL APPROACH  
TO HOMEBUILDING**

Craig Silliphant

Photography: David Renee

Reclaimed wood and custom hand rails create a feature staircase that doubles as a space divider.



"It takes a village to build a house," says Daren McLean, who has been building a home for his family in the Caswell Hill neighbourhood. He describes his new home as, "a product of a lineage of relationships."

Like The Beatles, McLean had "a little help from his friends": people like Curtis Olson, a unique developer in the city who is best known for the sustainable Shift Home (i.e. a modern, green and affordable home designed by an entire community online). A shared passion for sustainable development and design has brought together a group of folks who take any opportunity to work on a project as unique as McLean's home.

Daren has been working with architectural designer Crystal Bueckert, who has become a best friend now, after working with him and Curtis on the

Shift Home. "It has taken us a year to design [this house] and another year to build," notes Curtis. "Friendships like these, and many others, made this home possible."

McLean himself is a web designer, but sustainable building and home design has become a hobby to him in the last half-decade or so, which was the major impetus in building his new home.

"Every designer has a passion for design," he says. "Whether it's print, web or architecture, you have a sense of what's neat. Designing a home sort of fit into that."

The two-floor house is approximately 1700 square feet; it's an open concept design, with a staircase in the middle of the home that helps to divide the space. Accents like the main support beams, something that would



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be covered with drywall in another house, are left exposed here, lending more of a friendly and organic feeling to the space.

McLean notes that the house wasn't specifically designed to be the poster home for eco-friendly building, though they used sustainable methods and materials wherever possible. Most of the wood was taken from a farm outside the city, and the beautiful marble kitchen countertop was sourced from the Canada Building downtown.

The design of the house pulls from several different inspirations, yet it doesn't feel cluttered or unfocused. It's an amazing job of melding ideas into one unified plan.

"In designing the house," explains McLean, "we had three integrations." The first is the West Coast, because he and his wife and are both from the West Coast. The second is Scandinavian design; because they went to Denmark a couple of years ago and were inspired by the modern architecture. The third is evident with the

landscaping; it's based on Taos, New Mexico. "Many rich people from L.A. go there and drive old beater trucks," says McLean, "so you'd never know it's them. It's an eclectic place."

McLean and his wife just had a baby, so they are starting a new phase of life in their new home, something that has factored into the open design, an experiment to see if it creates a closer family unit. Rather than just buying a cookie-cutter house in suburbia, McLean can show not only his passion for design to his growing child, but also the importance of friends and community working together for a common goal with deeper meaning.

"We've loved it," says McLean. "Being involved with people who love this process and love doing it. It's about finding like-minded people who are fired up. The opportunity to do something unique can be rare." 

See more! Exclusive video and photos available online at [www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm](http://www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm)



# Custom Touches

## House Numbers as Creative Accents



Brick and Stone Solutions Inc.



Laser Impressions



Castle Designer Glass



Progressive Yard Works

Photos courtesy: Jessica Storozuk; Progressive Yard Works

There is nothing more frustrating than waiting impatiently while party guests or the pizza delivery driver are roaming the neighbourhood trying to find your house.

House address numbers are integral to both the safety and aesthetic appeal of a home. Emergency personnel are aided by large, clear house

numbers. Home signage is also an economical way to make a signature statement. Especially in the growing number of neighbourhoods with a labyrinth of similar streets, having a unique sign can be an important feature of your home.

A variety of home signage options can showcase your creativity. Home improvement

stores throughout the city offer numbers in different styles, sizes, and colours – even LED signs are available at a reasonable cost; however, the lower the price, the more generic the look. Homeowners willing to invest a bit more money will be surprised at how a simple house number can transform the first impression of their home.

An array of local companies within Saskatoon (see chart on next page) are willing to collaborate with customers in the design process, and will manufacture the sign on site. Diverse options range from natural elements such as glass and limestone to emerging trends in fibreglass and LED lighting. In **IF**



| Company                                                                                                                                                    | Product Options                                                                                                                                              | Style Advantages                                                                                        | Creative Options                                                                                                                                                                 | New Trends                                                                                                                                                  | Price Range                                                                                                                                                    | Mounting                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Brick and Stone Solutions Inc.</b><br>114-2834 Millar Ave<br>306.244.7866<br><a href="http://brickandstonesolutions.com">brickandstonesolutions.com</a> | Signs made from natural limestone of marble quality, slate or concrete. Sandblasting used to create numbers.                                                 | Durable - will not rust, peel or crack.                                                                 | Many different texture, color, shapes and sizing options. Can choose unique font, borders or images.                                                                             | Slate is becoming popular for the oval shape and craftsman feel. Reverse sandblasting (i.e. of background rather than numbers).                             | Price begins around \$125, with costs increasing depending on size, product and amount of detail.                                                              | Can be mounted on stucco, siding, brick and stone houses or as part of a signpost or stone cairn.         |
| <b>Castle Designer Glass</b><br>840 47th St E<br>306.477.0098<br><a href="http://castledesignerglass.com">castledesignerglass.com</a>                      | Signs made from ¼ inch thick kiln-formed glass that is hand painted and can be mounted over lights.                                                          | A very distinctive option. Glass mould is handmade each time so customer has a lot of creative control. | Hand-painted in any color, and texture can be added.                                                                                                                             | The product itself is still a new trend, with customers desiring something unique.                                                                          | Standard size retails for around \$275, with costs increasing based on size and detail.                                                                        | Designed to be mounted on the home but can also be adhered to landscaping rocks.                          |
| <b>Laser Impressions</b><br>306.978.7760<br>4-1540 Alberta Ave<br><a href="http://laserimpressions.ca">laserimpressions.ca</a>                             | Signs made from ¼ inch thick aluminum or ½ inch thick acrylic. Numbers are brushed or painted on with powder coat process and LED backlighting can be added. | Wide range of economical options for every budget.                                                      | Choose any colour, style and font. Vinyl film can be placed on back rather than paint for 3D effect and high-gloss finish.                                                       | LED backlit signs for a 3D effect, with letters up to 12 inches high.                                                                                       | Begins at \$85 for three numbers with costs increasing based on detail and lighting.                                                                           | Company can install but usually homeowner is given a mounting template to use on house or garden feature. |
| <b>Progressive Yard Works</b><br>3423 Millar Ave<br>306.244.6911<br><a href="http://progressiveyardworks.com">progressiveyardworks.com</a>                 | Illuminated, semi-translucent fibreglass lava rocks with numbers painted or bolted on. Products are hollow so can be placed over any lighting system.        | Looks like rock but functions as a light.                                                               | Can choose color size and shape of rock. Can also as well as create custom logos, names and fonts. Different colors of light can be used as well, and final product is portable. | Mini lava rocks to complement large statement piece. Waterfalls are gaining popularity. Originally designed for acreages and backyards, but can be adapted. | Medium lava rock costs \$279, with mini rocks beginning at \$34. Price increases depending on size and details required. Medium waterfall costs about \$8,500. | A freestanding feature showcased on lawn, placed over a low voltage lighting system.                      |

addition to numbers, other elements such as the family name, street name or images can be added to many of the choices. The only thing limiting homeowners is their imagination!

We hope we've piqued your creative spirit and desire to replace the mundane numbers currently perched on your house. Visit the company websites

for additional product information – or better yet, call or drop into the stores. They will be delighted to guide you through the options that will add

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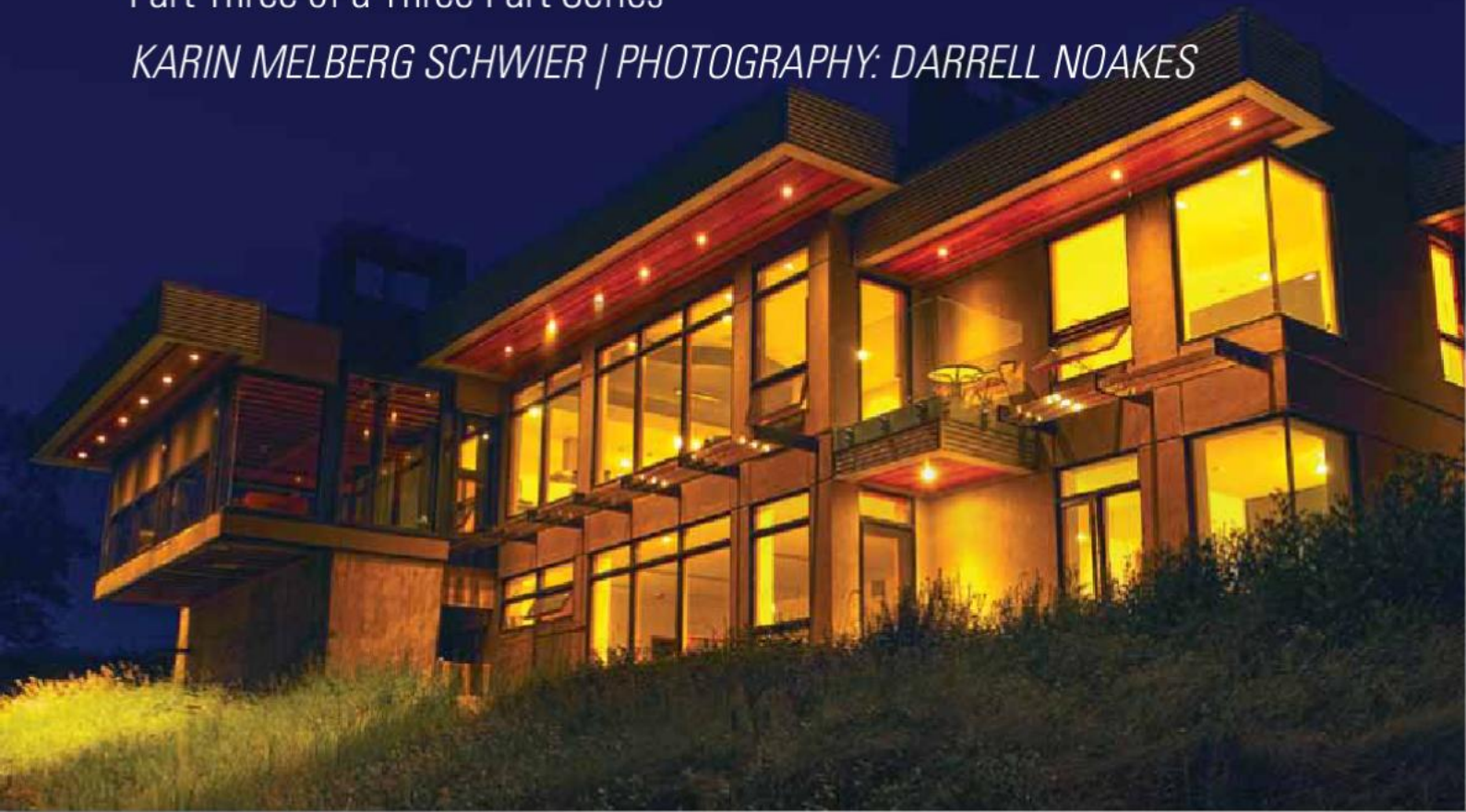
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# Architect and Artist's Rural Retreat: Thoughtful Design Allows for Fabulous Flourishes

Part Three of a Three Part Series

*KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER | PHOTOGRAPHY: DARRELL NOAKES*



*"The home should be the treasure chest of living."*

*—LE CORBUSIER*





He's a heritage award-winning Saskatoon architect; she's a textile artist and juried member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council. Heney and Gwen Klypak are also prairie pioneers of sorts. Over the last few years, they imagined, designed and built a sanctuary, a dream home that is a delicate balance between form, function and the natural setting. Theirs is a living space that appears to have grown from the prairie landscape, moulded into the contours of the creek below as if it has always been there.

From earnest beginnings as sketches in Heney's notebook, Opimihaw Run drew inspiration from works by Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra. An architect trained to think in broad

strokes as well as the social minutiae that make living spaces work well, Heney had more than a small advantage over many homeowners who choose to be their own construction manager. Not only did he have a wellspring of quality, trusted sub-trades with whom he had worked on other projects, but also his designer mind could anticipate miniscule details that would ultimately influence the home's function and comfort. Armed with that futuristic view as well as the certainty that things could be built very well, thank you, in an un-standard way, Heney was able to create a home purpose-built for their needs, incorporating elegant details throughout.

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## THE DETAILS ARE EVERYTHING

The rallying cry of realtors is all about location, and the Klypaks couldn't have found a better spot. But for Heney and Gwen, it's the detail work that makes their home breathtakingly exceptional. It's the little jawdroppers: a polished stainless steel edge to the exterior sidewalk provides protection to the concrete; as a safety feature, it reflects moonlight similar to airplane in-floor lighting. A recessed track built in to the roof overhang allows a hook and safety line to be clipped to a harness, much like a mountain climber's, when someone is washing the impressive expanse of glass windows. Heney's home office is multi-purpose with a Murphy bed custom designed to fold up and blend in as a bookcase. Anticipating advancing 



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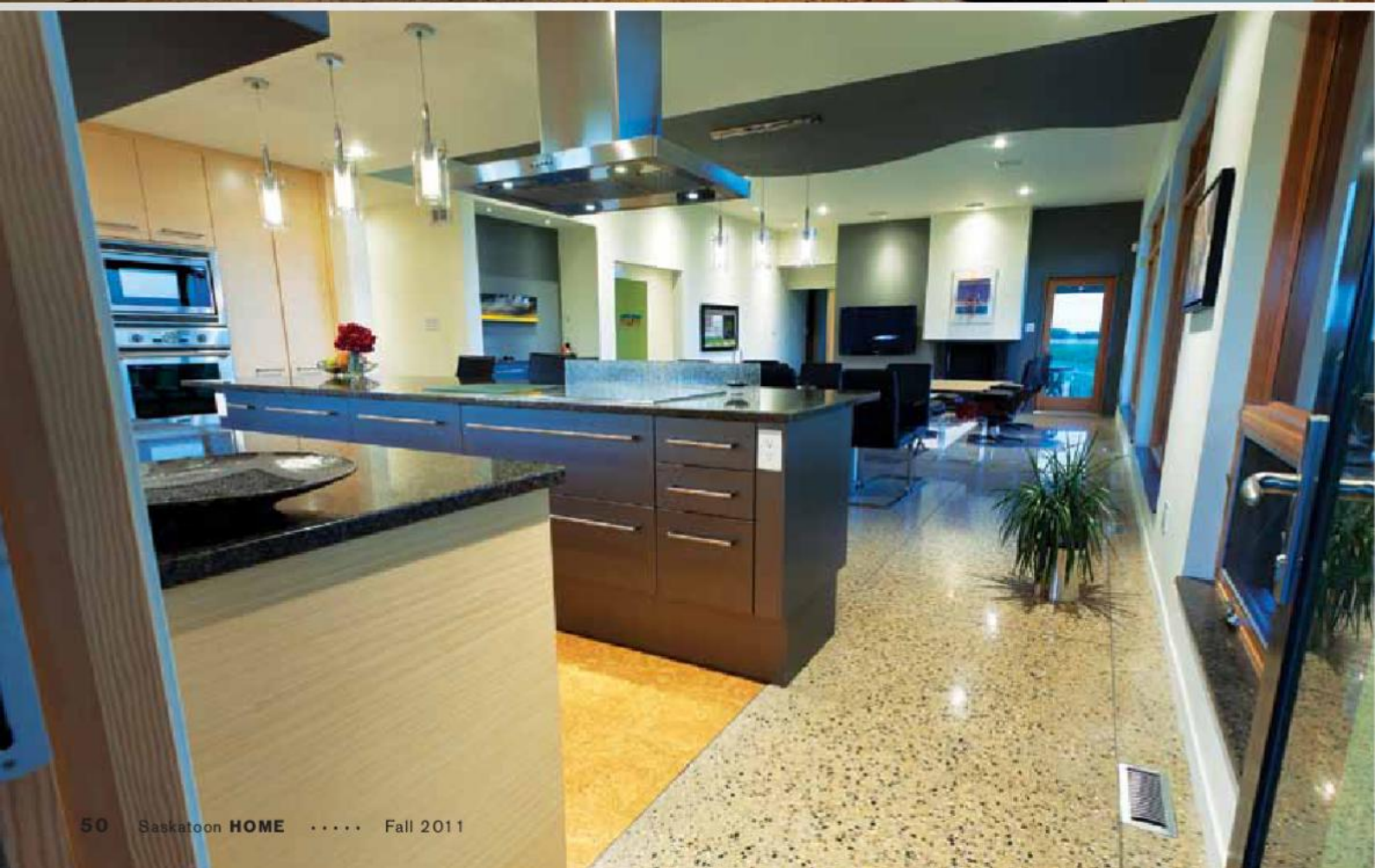


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years, a dormant elevator shaft waits for completion when the time is right.

The Klypaks discussed a few of their "little gems" that were included in the design; some simple, some more complex, but all add up to complete and utter satisfaction with their dream home.

"We just celebrated our first anniversary of living in our new home," says Heney. "After one year, we concluded we wouldn't have changed any of our design decisions. We did incorporate a few things that were not in the original budget, like the ceiling – installed surround sound system and the combination of glass and screen enclosed deck. I always recommend to clients

they carry a contingency to cover the few things that make sense during building." In this case, the Klypaks took their own advice and haven't regretted paying the few extra dollars to get exactly what they wanted.

Though they find it difficult to keep the list short, the Klypaks offer a list of a few of their best-loved details:

#### KLYPAK FAVOURITES

##### Glass treatment

The view is perhaps the most stunning feature, so large expanses of triple glazed glass serve to showcase it. Heney wanted no mullions, or posts, at the corner windows. "I built a prototype of a seamless, 






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airtight connection and took it to a glass company," Heney explains. "We consulted with the glass manufacturer to create a triple glazed window unit designed to receive a narrow width of silicone seal at the exterior glass corner."

#### **Concrete aggregate floors with cork inserts**

Ninety-five percent of the flooring is concrete, complete with a radiant in-floor heat system. The concrete aggregate provides an interesting and dynamic look to the polished surface. Sustainable cork was selected to provide a cushioned work area in the kitchen and also on the stairs where cork instep is paired with maple. "I absolutely love these floors!" Gwen says.

#### **Indoor/outdoor deck**

This area was thoughtfully designed with a guardrail, expanses of glass offering unobstructed views of the creek, sliding glass, and retractable bug screens. A modernist wood-burning fireplace provides the least obstruction to the panoramic view.

#### **Sans door, window casings, baseboards**

A lot trickier for the drywaller who can mask an opening or edge that isn't exactly true, frameless door and window openings provide a clean, sleek look.

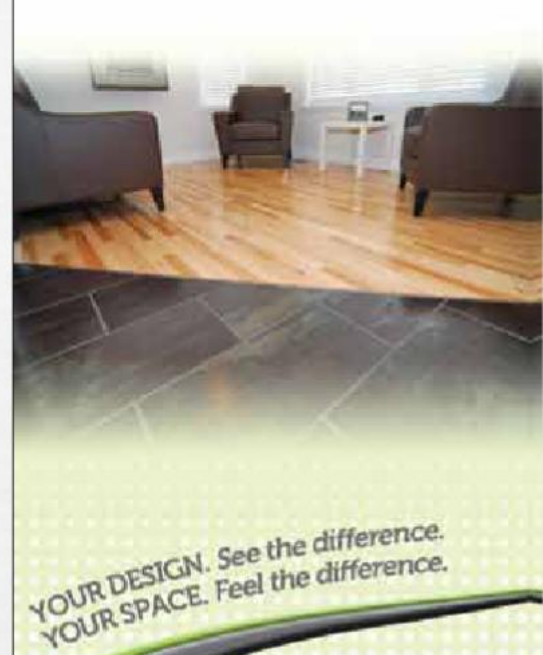
#### **Interior/exterior lighting**

Lighting is both functional and aesthetic, creating subtle mood or dramatic character. "Again, you need to know what you need the light to accomplish in an area. Reading, working, relaxing, cooking," explains Gwen. "The thought you put in about that at the start really pays off."

#### **Artist studio space**

Gwen's studio requirements included 700 square feet of floor area with abundant natural light and full spectrum lighting for evening work. The studio space, located in the lower level, has a direct view and walk-out access to the creek. The studio features nine foot high ceilings, complete with a two-sided natural gas fireplace integrated into the

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the demising wall between Heney's office and Gwen's studio area. Access to the studio by Gwen's students is by a glass block-wrapped stairwell adjacent to the front entrance. Like Heney's office, both spaces can easily be converted to accommodate weekend guests.

#### Garage drainage

"Think about the garage floor in winter when you drive in. Snow melts, where does the water go? Usually just all over the floor and it just sits there," Heney says. "Or you slope the floor so it'll drain out under the overhead door, but then it'll freeze the door to the floor." However, an interceptor pit built into the floor with a grate allows water and slush to drain away. A submersible pump empties the interceptor pit.

#### Man shed

A garage can be more than just a place to park the car. "You can go out and buy a garage package, pour a concrete slab and you're done," Heney says, who built a detached "man shed" to store an extra vehicle or two, plus acreage maintenance equipment. "Or

you can put some thought into what you want to use that space for. It's the same process you use when you are thinking about how space in your home is used." What a homeowner wants to accomplish can be incorporated as well as how it visually and functionally complements the house design.

#### HOUSE KARMA

The positioning of the residence in relation to Opimihaw Creek and the surrounding prairie has exceeded the couple's expectations in so many ways.

"People who come here can't believe the birds and wildlife that surround the house and the tranquility. It's magical at any time of day, any time of year." Heney pauses and smiles. "I think something was telling us we got it right." 🏡

*Go inside Heney and Gwen Klypak's home with an exclusive video tour. Also, collect the first two parts of this series, and complete your own room analysis online at [www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm](http://www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm)*



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# HOME Reflections

Appreciating where you live means knowing its history. HOME Reflections is a regular feature revealing interesting facts about our city from bygone days.



## SASKATOON'S HISTORIC MANSIONS

*Jeff O'Brien*

William Hopkins' grand house at 307 Saskatchewan Crescent West, ca. 1912-1916.

*Photo LH 1718 courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library*

There are certain streets in Saskatoon that beg to be walked down on a warm night in the summer or fall, simply for the joy of looking at the grand old houses that line them. Most of these houses went up in the space of two or three very amazing years, just before the First World War at the height of the city's first great building boom. Today,

they stand as monuments to a time when the city was young and opportunity was knocking so loudly you needed earplugs just to get to sleep at night.

The original settlement was in present-day Nutana. But when the railway came through in 1890, the railway company built its station and facilities on the hitherto undeveloped west bank, on

what is now First Avenue, near 20th Street. The commercial and social centre of the settlement soon followed, with residential districts near the river on the eastern periphery. It was here, on winding Spadina Crescent, that Saskatoon's first larger homes were built. The most notable of these was James Clinkskill's house,

just west of the Traffic Bridge in what is now River Landing. Built in 1903, it was a large, 3-storey building with a main floor verandah and second floor balcony running the full width of the house. Clinkskill – a politician and dry goods merchant who had come to Saskatoon from Scotland via the Battlefords – sold it to the federal government .





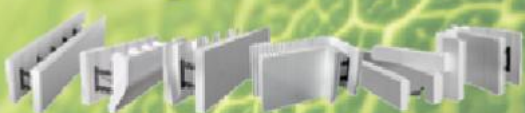
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James Clinkskill's living room in 1911.

Photo LH 2926-17 courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library

to use as an armoury during the First World War. It later became the Officer's Mess, and was finally demolished in 1960.

By 1906, when the then-villages of Nutana, Riversdale and Saskatoon (today's downtown) incorporated to become a city, Saskatoon was entering a period of extreme growth. These were the days of Saskatoon's great real estate boom, which peaked around 1910-1912. People were buying land, selling land, and getting rich. Real estate prices were going through

the roof and everyone was in on it. Optimism ruled. People were pouring into Saskatoon, as homesteaders made their way to the "last, best, west" where 160 acres of prime land could still be had for the price of a ten dollar filing fee. The banks were eager to loan money on easy terms. Quiet little Saskatoon, nestled in its sleepy bend of the South Saskatchewan River, exploded. Buildings and houses went up overnight and the air was filled with the sound of saws and the ringing of hammers. There were fortunes





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Grand homes on Saskatchewan Crescent West during the pre-war real estate boom.

Photo PH 88-643 courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library

to be made and every man, woman, and child a potential millionaire. It was during this period that the city's commercial barons staked out their exclusive preserves. Queen Street, University Drive and the Saskatchewan Crescents East and West joined Spadina Crescent on the list of streets housing Saskatoon's rich and famous.

One of the most prestigious of these new mansions was the 27-room, 2½ storey Hopkins House at 307 Saskatchewan Crescent West. William Hopkins was a hardware merchant turned real estate magnate and mayor of Saskatoon in 1909-1910. His house was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$50,000. The newspaper reported that the pillar at the front of the property cost \$3,000, and the hundreds



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James Clinkskill's Spadina Crescent home in 1903, just west of the Traffic Bridge roundabout in today's River Landing.

*Photo LH 69 courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library*

of balusters on the balconies (since removed) were hand-turned at a cost of a dollar a piece. With its huge classical portico at the front and full-height Ionic columns, it may well be the most distinctive of the city's boom-era mansions. The interior was opulent, with inlaid marble floors in the entrance hall and oak flooring (with deep pile carpet) and oak woodwork throughout the rest of the house. The doorknobs were made of cut glass, the bathtubs huge, and every bedroom had its own sink. The front door was made of plate glass and the landscaped grounds sloped to the river and included a stable with stalls for saddle ponies and coach horses. In a word, it was posh.

It was the centre of Saskatoon's social scene, famous for the garden parties that William's wife, Alice, threw in the summer. Hopkins died in 1935. In 1938, the house was sold and converted to luxury apartments. In 1960, it was purchased by the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate, who partitioned the larger rooms and added bathrooms. In 1982, it was again bought by a private owner who, devoting hundreds of hours of painstaking labour to the task, restored it to its original glory.

Another east side mansion worth noting stands at 870 University Drive. Built in 1912 by a farmer named Herman Pettit, it was designed by Frank P. Martin, one of Saskatoon's

most influential and prolific architects. Pettit wanted a house different from any other in Saskatoon, one that would turn heads. He got it. Stylistically, it has been described as "eclectic", with a huge carriage entrance with fieldstone pillars over the driveway, a tower with a bell-cast dome, and "a confusion of gables, bay windows and a couple of round porthole windows". Pettit stayed in his grand new mansion for only three years. It has been suggested that he made his money during the Great Boom and then lost it during the Great Bust that followed. In 1927, a new owner converted it into suites. In 2004, it once again became a single-family dwelling.

Across the river, Queen Street also boasted a number of well-appointed abodes, the most interesting of which is the Billy Silverwood house at 802 Queen Street. Silverwood was a horse breeder and bottled-water tycoon with property along the river in what is now Silverwood Heights, but was then a couple of miles past city limits. He is best known for his involvement in Factoria, a proposed industrial subdivision that was to be built on his land. Alas, Silverwood and his partners failed to convince the city to pay for a power line that far out, and the dream of Factoria died. Somewhere in the middle of all this, Silverwood built himself a brand new house in town, just across from the new City Hospital. 





The Pettit House at 870 University Drive.

Photo by Jeff O'Brien

## STREET NAMES



### BADER CRESCENT

Bader Crescent is in Montgomery Place, where most of the street names have something to do with the Second World War. Douglas Bader (1910-1982) was an RAF fighter pilot who became an ace despite having lost his legs in a flying accident between the wars. In dogfights, this was actually an advantage. In a tight turn, pilots could black out as blood rushed to their legs. Because he had no legs, he did not

black out. Eventually shot down himself, he was a leader of a group of prisoners of war who constantly tried to escape and cause as much trouble as possible for their German captors. After the war he worked for Shell Oil. His biography was published under the title *Reach for the Sky*.

From Saskatoon's History in Street Names by John Duerkop. Used with permission from Purish Publishing Ltd., Saskatoon.

He does not appear to have ever lived in it, however, and it sat vacant until the mid-1930s. It was briefly a private residence, then became a nursing home before the Salvation Army opened the Bethany Hospital there in the 1940s. Today, Bethany Home is a place of refuge for children and teenagers with no safe home in which to live.

An anomaly in our list of Saskatoon's historic mansions is the Powe House, on the corner of Central Avenue and 115th Street – in humble, working-class Sutherland, far from Saskatoon's corridors of power. Although perhaps not quite as grand as some of the city's other early mansions, the Powe house stood head and shoulders above its blue collar neighbours. Powe homesteaded there

in 1893, built his house in 1912-1914, and lived there until 1927. Built of brick, with stone foundations (two feet wide, made from stones carried in from his pasture), stone lintels over the doors and windows and stone piers supporting the veranda, it sat on the very edge of Sutherland until the 1960s when the town finally grew around it. It also had electricity – reportedly the first house in Sutherland to be so supplied – from a gas-powered generator feeding a bank of batteries.

The list of palatial houses built during the short years of the pre-First World War boom is surprisingly long. But for some of the original owners, the dreams of wealth and power that drove the building of these mansions was an illusion. Saskatoon has ever been a 



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place where boom and bust go round and round, and though some of our dreamers rode away with the prize, others saw it snatched from their hands. But in either case, they built the Saskatoon we know today. Today's dreamers are building new mansions in places like

Briarwood and the Willows. Perhaps in another century we'll walk those streets on a warm fall night and admire the beauty of their dreams as well. 

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# HOLD YOUR OWN HOME CONCERT!

Tom Kennedy | Photos courtesy: Plan9 Films

Great Lake Swimmers

You're looking for a way for you, your family and a few friends to really enjoy an artist in concert – one where you actually hear the words and melody and your ears aren't ringing for two days. Fortunately more and more musicians, tiring of bars and concert halls, are seeking to really connect with an audience and, of course, earn some well-deserved pay.

In one sense, house concerts have been around forever. New settlers in Canada rallied around their church or in their kitchens to dance and play music. Musicians have always

had informal concerts in people's homes. This process simply puts some structure to the practice.

Playing a house concert is as much fun as seeing one. You can tell the story behind the song, amaze people with a solo, or laugh with them when you forget the words – usually to a song you've written. Well-known musicians or new groups hoping to gain fans are available for bookings, so find someone you want to hear and approach them.

Here are a few tips for hosting a house concert:

## CONCEPT

Think of it as a mini-concert. You are promoter, security, box office and caterer. You line up the band or single performer; invite your friends – usually by phone or email – and when you have as many as your basement or family room will accommodate you say, "Sorry. Sold out!" Depending on your house size and layout, plan for about 25-40 people.

It's not a house party. You want your friends and relatives to understand it's a concert, so sit down, listen, enjoy, then visit and talk when there is a break – an intermission, if you

will. As an example you could have people arrive at 7:30 to mingle, start the performance at 8:15pm, have a break at 9pm and have your performers do a final set ending at 10. Mingle, visit and buy CDs (if the artist has some) until 10:30 or so and then kick out everyone by 11pm-ish because you've got some clean-up to do. You can go as late as you want to (it's your house) but if you stick to your schedule, you'll probably thank yourself in the morning.

## COSTS

The idea here is to cover your incidental costs but 





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provide most of the money gathered to the artist. Charge \$15-20 per person for most single, duo or small group performers.

### SETUP

Find a viewing place in your home that allows theatre-style seating for the most number of people, most comfortably. If you are in the basement, work around teleposts. Borrow or rent chairs and choose to use available furniture – couches, love seats etc. — maybe cover them if you are worried about spilled drinks or food crumbs.

### SOUND

Even small groups or solo artists prefer to bring a small sound system. They usually own one or can borrow gear for the gig. Allow an hour for them to set up, do a sound check and get levels right. It should sound like you are in someone's living room (wait, you are!), and loud enough to hear the singers and the instrumental mix. You want it to sound like you were relaxing with a glass of wine, listening to your favourite artist without distraction.

### FOOD

You can make it into a potluck, or just have finger foods. You don't have to provide supper, just something to nibble on before the show, during intermission and for a short while, after the concert is finished.

There are websites that you can explore. Check out [www.houseconcerts.com](http://www.houseconcerts.com) and [www.theneighborsdog.tv](http://www.theneighborsdog.tv).

Most of all, enjoy yourself. You're helping musicians, hosting friends and having a fun night all rolled into one. Cheers! 



Great Lake Swimmers

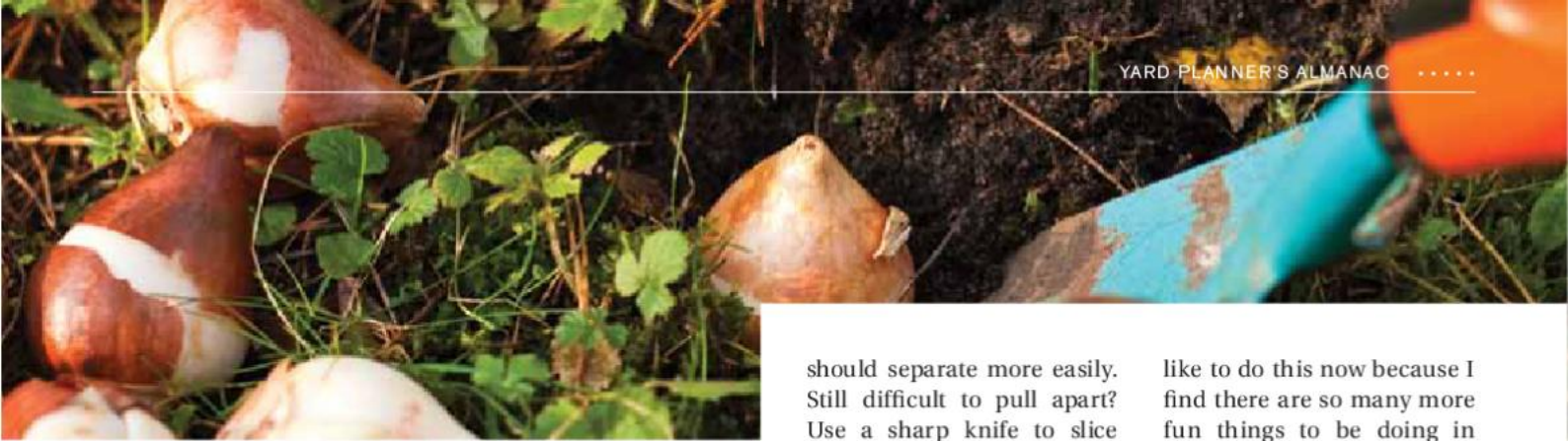




# **Yard Planner's Almanac**

*Denise Balcaen*





## SEPTEMBER

**Average Daytime High:** 18°C

**Average Daytime Low:** 4.9°C

**September 1:** Sunrise 6:17 a.m. Sunset 7:54 p.m.

**September 15:** Sunrise 6:40 a.m. Sunset 7:21 p.m.

September in Saskatoon — one of the nicest months in our year. Days are still warm and perfect for outdoor 'yardening'.

Plants are heeding the shorter days and cooler nights that are sending them into winter dormancy. Since

they put a lot less effort into growing at this point, it's my favourite time to move or divide them. If you intend to split up perennials with tightly tangled roots (ie: hostas, daylilies) soak the root clump in a pail of water for no more than 24 hours. They

should separate more easily. Still difficult to pull apart? Use a sharp knife to slice the clump in quarters and replant. Barring snowfall, you can safely transplant until mid-October.

Cut back any dying foliage and flowers. It neatens the appearance of your yard, and removing spent blossoms allows the plant to focus more energy on vigor instead of seed production. Once we've had a 'killing frost' (any frost severe enough to make most annuals and perennials look like wet tissue) shear back perennials to the ground in preparation for next year. I

like to do this now because I find there are so many more fun things to be doing in spring! Besides, if you wait until spring, everything is soggy and tougher to handle and you end up damaging the new growth.

Take advantage of fall bulb sales and get your 'Spring Surprises' in the ground as long as it is workable. I have successfully installed bulbs in soil that was just starting to get a frozen 'crust' - sometimes as late as mid-November. 

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## OCTOBER

Average Daytime High: 10.9°C

Average Daytime Low: 4.9°C

October 1: Sunrise 7:07 a.m. Sunset 6:44 p.m.

October 15: Sunrise 7:31 a.m. Sunset 6:12 p.m.

If you are fortunate enough to have leaves to rake in your yard — get to it! I save every leaf in my yard religiously in plastic bags. When I am laying out my vegetable patch come spring, I define the paths with 4" of dried leaves before I sow any seeds. These leaves soon get trampled down and become a nice alternative to muddy paths when the area is newly cultivated. Then they become wonderful compost once the season is done. I also use the leaves to mulch any newer shrubs or trees. It's cheap mulch and the easiest way I know to make compost.

In October you have the opportunity to put 2" of well rotted manure or any compost over perennial or shrub beds. It breaks down more slowly over winter, compared to summer, but the melting snow in the spring helps leach the nutrients and organic matter into the soil of existing beds. Do the same thing for your vegetable garden; rototill it in right away or wait until spring.

Ensure you give all your trees, shrubs, perennials and fall bulbs a good solid half-hour soak — especially cedars, spruce and pines. It helps them make it through our drying winters. Likewise, critical to the success of anything planted in autumn, is getting that extra moisture into their systems and ensuring the consequent settling of the soil around their new roots. 





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**NEW YARDS** - start dates

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Oct. 26 - Wed. - 10 am - noon or 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Oct. 29 - Sat. - 10 am - noon

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## NOVEMBER

**Average Daytime High: -1.1°C**

**Average Daytime Low: -10.1°C**

**November 1: Sunrise 8:01 a.m. Sunset 5:38 p.m.**

**November 15: Sunrise 8:26 a.m. Sunset 5:15 p.m.**

Clean and store outdoor tools, hoses and lawn furniture – anything that would suffer if left exposed to the elements. Even things like spray nozzles should be protected inside; they can take the cold but are not made to withstand our winter blasts!

I like to take on any construction repairs in the fall, getting jobs on fencing, sheds, or even the house out of the way.

It might be a bit nippy some days, but remember housing construction goes on year-round, so welcome a little outdoor yard work! Barring snowfall, look around and identify any chores you could get done today instead of waiting for our small window of 'Spring Fever' time. Think of eavestrough cleaning, shed or garage organizing, even identifying, planning and organizing future yard

projects. You will thank yourself later! Everything about the past summer and what you need for next year is much fresher in your mind now than in the depths of winter.

November is prime time for pruning. Most deciduous trees and shrubs have lost their foliage and are presenting their forms clearly. It is much easier to cut out dead, damaged or diseased wood because you

don't have all those leaves in the way. Also, you don't risk any encouragement of new growth since dormancy has set in. (I'll bet you didn't know that tree experts do a lot of pruning during winter.)

Make the most of these three months in your yard and watch for the next Yard Planner's Almanac. That's where we'll look at your yard in December, January and February! 



## Important Message: Call HOME!

HOME is written for readers like us – for people who don't have a \$2 million home in Saskatoon, and for those who do. What HOME readers all have in common is a desire to make the most of where they live. We can do that by decorating it, envisioning it, saving up for it, and – as in the case of our Street Names and Reflections features – learning more about it.

Consider this your invitation to be part of the HOME community. We invite you to contact us regarding:

- Your comments
- Story suggestions
- Submitting stories and/or photographs

(Yes. We pay for good content!)

We also hope you'll spread the word to your friends, relatives, neighbours – and to the businesses you like to patronize.

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